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Outcome of the Workshop on Governance for World Summit on Sustainable Development Implementation in Countries with Economies in Transition

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development the outcome of the Workshop on Governance for World Summit on Sustainable Development Implementation in Countries with Economies in Transition.

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Outcome of the Workshop on Governance for World Summit on Sustainable Development Implementation in Countries with Economies in Transition

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I. Introduction

1. The Workshop on Governance for World Summit on Sustainable Development Implementation in Countries with Economies in Transition was convened in Istanbul from 16 to 18 September 2003, hosted by the Government of Turkey.

2. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and gave a new impetus to global action to fight poverty and protect the environment. The understanding of sustainable development was broadened and strengthened as a result of the Summit, particularly with regard to the important linkages between poverty, the environment and the use of natural resources. Governments agreed to, and reaffirmed, a wide range of concrete commitments, in particular the Millennium Development Goals, as well as targets for action to achieve more effective implementation of sustainable development objectives. The views of civil society were given prominence in recognition of the key role of civil society in implementing the outcomes and in promoting partnership initiatives.

3. Member States were challenged to ensure that national policies balance short-term economic benefits with medium- and long-term objectives for economic and social development and environmental protection. Public administration and governance were given a role to play in achieving this goal through integrating the issues of sustainable development into governmental policy-making in all fields and at the local, national, regional, and global levels. In its resolution 50/225 of 1 May 1996, the General Assembly stated that there was a critical need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management to address the global challenge to promote sustainable development in all countries. Creating and strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development in countries with economies in transition was emphasized in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) that was adopted at the Summit.

4. Countries with economies in transition face the challenge of having to fully equip their public institutions in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development. They will need to overcome sector-based approaches and proceed with an integrated economic, social and environmental approach so as to create a long-term frame of reference that can serve as a guide to development actions and policies. This integrated approach will have to take into account both macroeconomic factors and the need for short-term structural adjustments, allow for the possibility of addressing many vital problems (such as health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation, air quality and employment), take into consideration the development of each sector and promote sustainable development at all levels.

5. Prior to the Summit, a workshop on capacity-building in governance and public administration for sustainable development in countries with economies in transition was organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management. The workshop was hosted by the Government of Greece in Thessaloniki, from 29 to 31 July 2002, and brought together senior government officials from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia as well as

representatives of non-governmental organizations from those regions. The report of that workshop was made available to the participants of the workshop held in Istanbul.

6. The purpose of the Istanbul Workshop was to follow up on the outcomes of the Summit, taking into account the results of the workshop held in Thessaloniki. Specifically designed for countries with economies in transition, the Istanbul Workshop aimed to: (a) report on the status of implementation of the Summit outcomes; (b) identify national priorities for implementing the outcomes; (c) explore means of implementing the outcomes through options for institutional arrangements, governance and public administration reform, national strategies for sustainable development, capacity-building and promoting the role of civil society in decision-making; and (d) promote intraregional cooperation through the exchange of national experiences with implementing Agenda 21 and with expediting implementation of the Summit outcomes at national and regional levels.

II. Panel discussions

Workshop session 1
Country experiences

7. The session began with presentations by six panellists, including three government officials and three representatives from major groups.

8. The representative of Poland explained that the constitution of her country referred directly to sustainable development. A number of long-term national strategies and policies had already been put in place, such as those for renewable energy and waste management; others were in progress, including those for sewage treatment, production and consumption patterns and climate change. A board on sustainable development had been established, including representatives from a number of ministries, scientists and representatives from business, industry and non-governmental organizations. The purpose of the board, which reported to the Prime Minister, was to coordinate and monitor the implementation of sustainable development commitments. Institutional arrangements were also in place at the local level. Many local governments had developed their own strategic development plans on the basis of Agenda 21 principles. Actions identified for further development in Poland included improving the integration of economic, social and environmental issues, enhancing the development of intersectoral partnerships and consulting more extensively with civil society.

9. The representative of Hungary explained that the requirements associated with European Union (EU) integration had changed the national decision-making process and had motivated Hungary towards sustainability. The Government had incorporated sustainable development principles into relevant sector policies, such as transport and energy. A national sustainable development strategy process — initiated prior to the Summit and planned for completion before 2005 — had involved broad public dialogue and consensus-building. For improved coordination, it was planned that a national council for sustainable development should be established, which would include high-ranking officials, local authorities, scientists, workers, employers, youth and environmental non-governmental organizations. The Government had also started working on a 10-year framework for sustainable production and consumption patterns with broad public participation. Further

education and awareness-raising were needed as sustainable development principles needed to be more broadly known and understood.

10. The representative of Belarus explained the process of developing a national strategy in his country. A coordination committee "think tank" had been established to discuss ideas. The strategy had also been amended in the light of widespread public consultation involving all interested parties. Various economic and social measures had been undertaken to implement the strategy, bearing in mind such issues as democracy, poverty alleviation, protection of the environment, international cooperation and health. Positive effects of the strategy had been that the process of sustainable development has been institutionalized in Belarus, with a concrete framework established, taking into consideration international trends and public opinion.

11. The panellist representing the Eco-Accord Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development, located in the Russian Federation, said that newly independent States commonly lacked a strong environmental authority, which was a particular concern given that the Russian Federation had signed very few multilateral environmental agreements in recent years and had ratified even fewer. The decision-making process was not considered to be open and transparent, and a national council for sustainable development in the Russian Federation was needed with full multi-stakeholder participation. The existing multi-stakeholder approach was not yet as effective as it could be; it was often organized very late in the process, senior officials rarely took part in it and not all stakeholders were equally involved. The Summit had been helpful in placing a number of important issues high on the political agenda in the Russian Federation, such as water and education for sustainable development. She hoped that the same would happen for other issues that had been prioritized at the Summit.

12. The President of the Society for Sustainable Living, located in Slovakia, stated that the decision-making process for implementing sustainable development activities at national and subregional levels depended on the involvement of all relevant partners, such as intergovernmental organizations, ministries, towns and local associations. Some countries had a more positive attitude than others towards involving non-government actors. One of the main problems in implementing sustainable development was identified as a lack of interest by decision makers, media and the public alike. Cross-sectoral programmes with real support mechanisms were needed at all relevant levels and included such key features as integration, a long-term approach, partnerships, participation and solidarity.

13. The Chairperson of the Board of the Green Network of Vojvodina, located in Serbia and Montenegro, said that there was no national strategy for sustainable development in her country, nor were sustainable development elements included in other sectoral strategies. Only the Ministry of Environment gave sustainable development any consideration. She felt that the Government was indifferent to sustainable development and had made little effort to understand Agenda 21 and related documents. The inadequate legal framework made environmental protection at the local level nearly impossible. The Green Network of Vojvodina had been working on a practical project to help rural farmers by educating them about organic food production and community tourism opportunities. She felt that other non-governmental organizations could help by promoting public awareness activities, such as cooperating with the media, educating decision makers and helping

universities and agricultural colleges to understand sustainable development issues. Countries with economies in transition needed assistance from developed countries, such as through the transfer of technologies, to avoid falling further behind.

14. Following the panel presentations, an interactive dialogue was held with other participants, focusing on concrete steps that needed to be taken at the national level to implement sustainable development. The outcome of the discussion is reflected in section III below.

Workshop session 2
Institutional issues

15. The session began with presentations by five panellists, including two government officials, one major group representative and two resources persons.

16. The panellist representing the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat began the session with a presentation on national strategies for sustainable development. The comprehensive presentation covered global targets, initiatives that had been undertaken in this area by the United Nations and by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, and the global status of implementation of the strategies, as well as their evolution, definition, principles and characteristics. The representative also explained the process of participation, the reasons why the strategies required constant improvement and, finally, the major challenges that faced Governments in developing and implementing them.

17. The representative of Belgium, who served as a resource person for the Workshop, described her Government's experience with developing and implementing strategies. She explained that development of a strategy not only involved decision-making, but also provided a framework that defined how decisions were to be taken. In the Belgian federal strategy on sustainable development, strong involvement of all relevant departments was crucial, as was widespread consultation and coordination. The interdepartmental commission on sustainable development had formulated a preliminary draft plan at the federal level, on the basis of the first federal report on sustainable development and the council for sustainable development had given advice on the draft plan. Thirty per cent of the draft plan had been changed as a result of this advice and wide consultation. The Belgian Government had discussed the draft plan at length and had adopted a final plan. When some of the suggestions received from the council had not been taken into consideration by the Government, legislation had required the Government to explain why. The Government of Belgium had just completed its second federal report on sustainable development, thus beginning the second strategy cycle at the federal level.

18. The representative of Bulgaria explained that sustainable development had been clearly stated as a primary policy objective in two key Bulgarian documents: a national economic development plan and the EU pre-accession economic programme. Efforts had been made to communicate the goals and priorities of the plans to the general public. The medium-term budgetary framework was interlinked with policies to facilitate sustainable development. Two major institutions were responsible for sustainable development in Bulgaria: a national commission for sustainable development, including ministers from five departments, and a coordination council, chaired by the Minister of Finance. In terms of challenges, the

involvement of civil society was still proving hard to achieve, due in part to a lack of education, a passive attitude towards government initiatives, the ongoing effects of the former regime, and turbulent transition. Other problems were related to financial resources; for example, EU structural funds needed to be complemented with national assets but it was difficult to attract private-sector investment in such projects.

19. The representative of the Czech Republic explained that the environmental and sustainable development renaissance of the country had begun in 1990. In 1995, a state environment policy had been adopted that recognized the principles of sustainable development and the need to integrate policies into other sectors. This policy had been updated every two to three years. Sectoral strategic policies incorporating the principles of sustainable development had been developed since 1997 in areas such as energy, regional development and minerals. In 1999, a council for social and economic strategy had been created. Working groups on sustainable development had then been formed for the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development programme on sustainable development (2000-2003) and national preparations for the Summit (2002). From 1998 to 2001, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project on building national capacity for sustainable development had led to the proposal for a national sustainable development strategy (2001). The promotion of sustainable development had been an integral part of Czech policy since 2002. A council for sustainable development had been established in August 2003. The council, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, had 28 members including major groups and parliamentarians as well as senior government officials. Its main objective in the forthcoming year was to elaborate a strategy for the Czech Republic by June 2004.

20. The President of the Association for Sustainable Human Development, located in Armenia, explained that Armenia faced many difficulties in developing a national strategy. She felt that national mechanisms were very important but that local councils were also useful. Despite what had been stated at the Summit, the general situation in many newly independent States was worsening. The process of transition to sustainable development had to be considered in parallel with the transition period. Social, environmental and economic considerations needed to be combined, but they were still far apart — if not getting further apart — in newly independent States. Significant training was needed in those countries as they were far behind others in many respects. Given the complexity of the situation, it was necessary to compare the situation with that in other similar countries. She suggested the need for a different set of indices to measure sustainable development for developed countries, developing countries and for countries with economies in transition, based on UNDP data, that took into account their respective situations.

21. After the panel presentations, the participants convened into small groups. The results of their collective deliberations are reflected in section III below.

Workshop panel 3
Civil society and the private sector

22. The workshop began with presentations from five panellists, each from a major group.

23. The representative of the Institute for Environmental Policy, located in the Czech Republic, explained that — from his experience — dialogue and cooperation

between civil society and the public sector were generally easiest at the local level. It was more difficult at the national level due to the large number of non-governmental organizations, and the disparity between the narrow focus of their work and the breadth of sustainable development issues. He said it was important to include civil society in the decision-making process for sustainable development, such as by having non-governmental organization representatives on national councils for sustainable development and stakeholders involved in the preparation of national strategies. Progress had been made regarding the involvement of civil society at the international level but more needed to be done. It was particularly complicated to find representatives at the international level owing to the heterogenic nature of civil society; those involved at the international level were often not connected with local groups.

24. The Dean of the Faculty of Horticulture, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, located in Romania, discussed sustainable development activities relating to rural and farm communities in Romania. One third of the population lived in rural areas and there were over four million farms. Maintaining a sustainable rural society was, therefore, a critical issue for Romania. Judicious use of natural resources was needed for the long-term stability of the agricultural sector. The University had provided a consultancy service to support farmers with technological, ecological and economical practices. He believed it was important for farms to reach an optimum size (which varied according to the type of farming) and to increase the yield per hectare. He also considered the involvement of civil society at the national level to be important.

25. The President of the Environmental Youth Association, located in Bosnia and Herzegovina, explained how her organization had been involved in a number of small-scale sustainable development projects, many related to raising awareness. One of their education projects had resulted in environmental education being included in school curricula, providing a good example of how youth groups could be effective on a practical level. She explained that many environmental non-governmental organizations in her country had no paid staff or equipment, and needed to raise their own funds for projects. The role of civil society was particularly important in her country where great efforts were needed to improve the environment so that displaced persons could return.

26. The President of the Liberal Society Institute, located in Ukraine, focused on gender issues within the sustainable development process. International women's networks had worked closely together, developing common positions to maximize the effectiveness of their lobbying. They had achieved some success on gender issues at the Summit, but were disappointed that most gender references related to education and health issues rather than to forming a central concept within the scope of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Women in countries with economies in transition had faced a number of particular problems since economic liberalization, and most women had found it difficult to retain or find stable jobs. With privatization, men still held 92 per cent of ownership in such countries. Women still faced discrimination in the workplace. She noted that young women were increasingly being exploited by the intra- and inter-country sex trade; women were also the victims of domestic violence. They were underrepresented in the new political system, particularly at the national level. Their absence at senior policy levels meant that their concerns and priorities were often ignored. Many countries

with economies in transition did, however, have action plans to improve the status of women that they could be considered equal social partners and actors.

27. The representative of business from Georgia explained how her consultancy company was involved with sustainable development issues. For example, it had helped communities to find alternative sources of water supply and had undertaken projects on joint monitoring of transboundary water sources. It had also worked on a new approach to food quality based on a hazard approach, and had tried to resolve the energy problems that had led to deforestation and land degradation. In her experience, Georgia had good environmental legislation, which addressed the responsibilities of government, businesses and developers and also contained requirements for transparency. However, the legislation did not seem to translate into reality and people tended not to become involved since they felt their efforts would have no impact. She suggested that mechanisms were needed to educate people and to empower well-informed communities to influence decision makers.

28. During the ensuing interactive discussion with other workshop participants, a number of proposals were made relating to the role of civil society and the private sector, which are included in section III below.

Workshop session 4
Governance and public administration

29. Six panellists representing a variety of Governments and organizations opened the discussion on this topic.

30. The panellist representing the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat made a presentation on governance and sustainable development related to the follow-up to the Summit. He discussed the challenges of sustainable development as reflected in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The importance of good governance for sustainable development, both within each country and at the international level, was highlighted. He also described several important elements of governance, including institutional arrangements, tools, techniques and institutional processes, such as partnerships and networking. The nexus between governance and sustainable development was reviewed.

31. The representative of the World Bank underlined his organization's commitment to implementing the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. World Bank calculations showed that achieving Goal 7, relating to the environment, would necessitate substantial additional aid, over the next 15 years, to countries with economies in transition. Experience and analysis showed that there was a strong causal relationship between good governance and good development results. While there was no "one size fits all" solution, some elements were generic for good governance, including responsiveness through inclusive and transparent decision-making, efficiency and reliability in providing basic social services, accountability in the way resources were being used, and monitoring results. Through its lending operations and analytical work, the World Bank had contributed to strengthening policies and institutions, such as through regulatory frameworks, strengthening ministries of environment, improving social and environmental safeguards and cooperating with non-governmental organizations.

32. The representative of the Republic of Moldova stressed that activities devoted to the implementation of sustainable development principles in his country were coordinated by a supreme economic council under the President of the Republic of Moldova and the Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development. An economic growth and poverty reduction strategy had been formulated. It included such issues as the integration of sustainable development principles into every sector of the national economy, combating poverty, the creation of civil society and the restoration of environmental and biodiversity conservation. Since the Summit, the Government had taken steps to attract donors and investors to support programme implementation. He said that international cooperation had played an important role in sustainable development. Most sustainable development problems could effectively be solved only if they were addressed in a regional and global context.

33. The Deputy Mayor of Bourgas, Bulgaria, explained that his municipality had developed a strategy for sustainable development that was being implemented at all levels of society. In 2002, the municipality had started a new initiative to establish an advisory committee on sustainable development, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy. Members of different parties and stakeholders of the city would participate in the decision-making process. In May 2000, a new municipal strategy for sustainable development, covering the period 2002-2006, was introduced and approved by the city council. The strategy set out the main policy goals and priorities for the future development of the municipality. To implement the strategy, the municipality had developed a number of priority projects in different fields of activity. The Deputy Mayor stressed that good governance had to be introduced and consolidated through such tools as sustainable strategies, local leadership, national policies and networks. He suggested that national and regional sustainable development criteria, such as those existing in EU countries, should be developed.

34. The representative of Kyrgyzstan explained that his country's national strategy for human development included issues relating to public administration and good governance. As a pilot country, Kyrgyzstan — in cooperation with the World Bank — had drafted a strategy for the complex development framework. The document had been approved in May 2001 by the national assembly and included representatives of state authorities, non-governmental organizations, political parties, the mass media and local authorities. The main pillars of the framework were efficient and transparent public administration, equitable human development and sustainable economic growth. The national poverty reduction strategy also emphasized effective administration and good governance. After independence, Kyrgyzstan had undergone public administration reforms, particularly regarding transparency, accountability and the redistribution of power between central and local levels. Recently, it had established a national council on good governance, which was headed by the Prime Minister and included representatives of public authorities, political parties, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community and the mass media.

35. The representative of the Russian Federation explained that the President had approved a concept framework for transition to sustainable development in April 1996. The Government paid significant attention to issues of governance and sustainable development. A department of sustainable development existed within the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. In cooperation with other

departments, the Ministry had been preparing the Russian Federation for the transition to sustainable development. It had also developed a short- and medium-term economic development strategy. The Government had paid particular attention to economic and environmental safety, public procurement and the use of economic and legal instruments to ensure a healthy environment. Russian science had enormous potential, which was being harnessed for sustainable development through government programmes.

Workshop session 5
The role of regional organizations

36. Presentations were made by representatives of four regional organizations that worked closely with countries with economies in transition.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

37. The representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) explained that the role of the regional commissions and other regional organizations had been recognized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the decisions adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session. A well-established architecture of regional and subregional organizations existed that could effectively assist countries in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. ESCAP could make important interventions at the policy, institutional and partnership levels. It was playing a vital role in enhancing the capacity of policy makers and institutions, particularly in the planning and management of natural resources and the environment, the development of national strategies and in cohesive policy implementation. Important issues, such as the nexus between poverty reduction and sustainable development, were being addressed in an integrated manner by promoting partnerships between the public and private sectors for the delivery of services to meet the basic needs of the poor, in such key areas as water, energy, health and biodiversity. Pro-poor policies and partnerships were being promoted and multi-stakeholder partnerships were being developed for the sustainable development of cities and improvement of the urban environment. ESCAP had also demonstrated the efficacy of cooperation among countries with economies in transition. For example, in Central Asia, countries were cooperating to develop a subregional strategy for the management of water and energy resources. There had been very active cooperation between ESCAP and other regional and subregional organizations to promote good governance for the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

United Nations Development Programme

38. The representative of UNDP explained that her organization had addressed the challenges of economic transition through the provision of technical and financial support and advisory services to programme countries. Since the Summit, the focus of UNDP activities in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region had been on helping countries to develop the capacity for implementing Summit outcomes and reaching the Millennium Development Goals, while promoting democratic governance and sustainable local development. She said that the implementation approach had reflected the widely recognized demand for concrete action towards sustainable development. UNDP had a local presence in 24

countries in Europe and the CIS countries. Its work in the region had fallen into three main areas: promoting democratic governance with a particular emphasis on enhancing good local governance and effective local development; reducing poverty and supporting economic development and viable local economies; and protecting the environment. She further explained that UNDP had assisted programme countries in analysing their priority needs, develop programmes and monitor their implementation. She described Capacity 2015, a new UNDP initiative launched at the Summit to help countries to develop their capacity to benefit from globalization and meet the Goals.

Economic Commission for Europe

39. The representative of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) discussed a number of ways through which regional organizations such as ECE contributed to sustainable development, including: support to national and regional governance; enabling civil society; promotion of integrative and harmonized policies and strategies; and fostering partnerships at national, subregional and regional levels. She stated that one important tool to support national governance was the peer review process, carried out through the environmental performance review programme. Civil society had been significantly empowered through the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), for which ECE is secretariat, through partnerships with major groups in intergovernmental processes, both within ECE and through the environment for Europe process, and through a number of workshops and other activities. Through its five regional conventions and a number of non-binding instruments, ECE had strengthened regional governance for sustainable development and, by implementing these instruments, national governance as well. Harmonization and integration had been furthered through the environment for Europe process. She stressed that many activities in the ECE region were facilitated by strong partnerships among other organizations in the region.

European Commission

40. The European Commission representative presented the EU sustainable development strategy, which had been endorsed in 2001 as the main tool for EU implementation of Summit commitments. The strategy built on the EU Lisbon strategy for economic, social and environmental renewal. It was a major step forward for integrated policy-making, since social, economic and environmental objectives would be discussed together at the highest political level. An external dimension was added to the strategy in the preparatory process for the Summit, addressing trade and development policies, external relations and the impact of EU internal policies on non-EU countries. In the 2003 annual review of the strategy, specific attention had been paid to the implementation of the Summit commitments through the strategy. In 2004, there would be a more thorough review of the strategy with improved stakeholder consultations. The special nature of the relationship between EU and countries with economies in transition, as well as other European neighbours, would also be taken up, especially since 10 new member states were scheduled to join the EU in May 2004.

III. Recommendations

41. Based on its discussions, the Workshop made the recommendations set out below.

A. National experiences

42. The Workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) **Better understanding of sustainable development should be promoted at all levels, including within and between the ministries of government;**

(b) **A change of outlook is needed within Governments, not only to make laws but also to ensure that they are properly implemented and that they include civil society participation;**

(c) **Implementation plans, including operational objectives and human resource implications, should be prepared;**

(d) **The social dimension of sustainable development, including priority for decent jobs and safe working conditions, should receive more attention and should be more effectively promoted;**

(e) **Measurable goals and timetables should be established for achieving a critical mass of women in environmental decision-making in order to ensure gender balance in such decision-making within all Governments, national and international agencies, and in environment and sustainable development-related policies and programmes;**

(f) **Additional training and international cooperation are needed in general;**

(g) **Information should be made more available to the public, such as by having it posted on web sites and included in official documents with concrete examples of best practices and possible actions;**

(h) **Education and raising awareness about the importance of sustainable development should be undertaken at all levels, including among parliamentarians, politicians, government officials and the general public and at the workplace.**

B. National strategies for sustainable development and institutional issues

43. The Workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) **Governments are accountable for implementing national sustainable development strategies, including the establishment of goals, targets and systems for monitoring their implementation. Civil society, the scientific community and expert groups should also play a role in monitoring and reporting progress, including by providing alternative reports;**

(b) **Countries should consider how their sustainable development strategies correspond with their other national and sectoral strategies in order to promote policy coherence and avoid overlap;**

(c) **Strong leadership and political commitment should be provided to ensure that the implementation of national sustainable development strategies starts no later than 2005 and develops successfully;**

(d) **Decision makers should be trained on sustainable development issues, methodologies and tools for implementing the strategies;**

(e) **Strategy awareness-raising and capacity-building should be undertaken at all levels so that everyone can understand and contribute to the process;**

(f) **The strategies should place equal weight on the three pillars (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development;**

(g) **The strategy process should incorporate a balanced, cross-sectoral approach, and be linked, where appropriate, to existing international guidelines and strategies;**

(h) **The strategy process should be structured so that changes of government do not interrupt its implementation. In particular, long-term concepts of sustainable development should be developed;**

(i) **The strategy development and implementation process should be fully transparent, inclusive and participatory;**

(j) **Environmental management systems (e.g., ISO 14000, the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) and other tools (e.g., integrated pollution prevention and control, environmental impact assessment, integrated resource management and green procurement programmes) should be fully integrated into national systems for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development;**

(k) **A strong, national coordinating body, such as a national council on sustainable development, with adequate autonomy in the context of an appropriate legal framework, should be established and should include all relevant stakeholders;**

(l) **Support should be increased for improved monitoring systems and for greater coordination of statistical efforts, including improved statistical information that would show progress made towards achieving sustainable development objectives and goals;**

(m) **Governments should design and develop indicators and targets related to sustainable development implementation by drawing on the international work already completed on national indicators of sustainable development, including the assessment of data availability and the use of available data for the compilation of such indicators. Gender-disaggregated data should be included in all monitoring, information and reporting systems on sustainable development at the local, national and regional levels;**

(n) **International peer review for facilitating the implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes should be considered;**

(o) **Strategic environment assessments are an important tool for decision makers to determine, at an early stage, the potential impact of policies and plans on the environment. To promote sustainable development, the application of the assessments should also take into consideration social impacts.**

C. Civil society and the private sector

44. The Workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) **Civil society in countries with economies in transition should increase networking and make greater use of modern technologies such as the Internet, e-mail and online discussions to enhance coordination;**

(b) **Greater coordination should be encouraged between trade unions and other major groups, because the workers' movement embraces many elements of society. Decent employment for young people should be given special attention;**

(c) **Governments should make greater effort to work with youth groups. Several key areas in which such collaboration could be beneficial include education, sustainable production and consumption, combating HIV/AIDS, combating trafficking in women, poverty alleviation and youth employment programmes;**

(d) **Effective cooperation should be managed through partnerships between Governments and major groups;**

(e) **Major groups should move beyond providing criticism to developing constructive solutions to help Governments to formulate appropriate policies and programmes;**

(f) **Civil society should be more informed about its rights and its potential to participate more actively in the governmental decision-making process;**

(g) **The local Agenda 21 process provides a good model and means for the involvement of civil society and consideration should be given to adapting it for use at the national level;**

(h) **Assistance from Governments and intergovernmental organizations is needed for establishing and strengthening local youth councils;**

(i) **Corporate social responsibility and accountability in relation to environmental regulations should be encouraged to promote business ethics and corporate behaviour that is environmentally friendly and enhances sustainable development;**

(j) **Partnerships between the business community, civil society and Governments are instrumental for the implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes and should be encouraged and actively promoted.**

D. Governance and public administration

45. The Workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) **Sound macroeconomic policies, functional democratic institutions and proactive civil society initiatives, including the role of youth, should be promoted as the basis for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and employment generation;**

(b) **Most countries with economies in transition have developed good framework legislation, but the main current concern is to develop the sub-laws and regulatory framework for implementing that legislation. Governments and civil society should assume more responsibility for facilitating and monitoring implementation;**

(c) **Coordination, coherence and dialogue between all relevant government departments and other stakeholders should be a priority at all stages of implementing sustainable development, especially for national strategies and plans;**

(d) **Economic instruments should be developed to provide people with incentives to protect the environment;**

(e) **The needs of the poor and of marginalized groups should be clearly defined, and policies should be more effectively designed to improve their living conditions, with special emphasis given to the land restitution process;**

(f) **The capacity of national public administrations to formulate and implement pro-poor policies should be strengthened, including through professional rather than political appointments at appropriate civil service levels;**

(g) **Governments should explore measures that can mobilize additional internal resources to implement sustainable development. Adequate financial resources, technology transfer and technical assistance should be provided by bilateral and multilateral donors at the national and local levels — including civil society, as appropriate — to support countries with economies in transition to implement sustainable development;**

(h) **To overcome resource constraints, partnerships between the public and private sectors should be facilitated and fostered to provide services to meet the basic needs of the poor, in particular access to clean water, affordable energy and health services;**

(i) **An enabling environment should be created for local business development and investors, both domestic and foreign, including the promotion of active labour market policies;**

(j) **To address the issue of extreme poverty, access to credit should be enhanced for small and micro-businesses, with clear guidelines and mechanisms for the disbursement of such credits.**

E. The role of regional organizations

46. The Workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) **The essential role that regional commissions and other regional/subregional organizations have been playing to enhance national capacities at the policy and institutional levels for promoting good governance for the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation has proved effective and should be further strengthened;**

(b) **Based on countries' institutional arrangements, decentralization should be promoted. Local authorities should be empowered to collect local taxes to enable them to provide high-quality public services and to formulate financial planning that is more predictable and realistic;**

(c) **Implementation of local Agenda 21 initiatives should be strengthened at all stages, from planning to realization.**

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Letter dated 13 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the report of an international conference on the theme "Water for the poorest", held in Stavanger, Norway, on 4 and 5 November 2003 (see annex). I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(*Signed*) Johan L. **Løvald**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* E/CN.17/2004/1.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

THE INTERNATIONAL WATER ACADEMY *

"Water for the Poorest"

Responding to the Millennium Goals

A Conference in support of

The United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development
12th Session

STAVANGER, NORWAY, 4-5 NOVEMBER 2003

*The International Water Academy is a non-for profit organization of 220 members from more than 40 countries. Members of the Academy are selected from the public sector, NGOs, the business community and water professionals. Membership is for life. The objective of the work of the Academy is to prevent water conflicts, foster capacity building and involve members in water policy dialogue for the benefit of the poorest.

Foreword

The "Water for the Poorest" conference has been designated by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as a Conference in support of CSD. This Conference Report is prepared for submission to the CSD's 12th session, April, 2004 in New York.

The conference was motivated by concerns of TIWA-members, and International Community and South-representatives, that progress of actions towards Millennium Development Goals (MDG) fulfillment are lagging significantly behind the ambitions of world leaders.

"Water for the Poorest" conference participants convened in November 2003 in Stavanger, Norway to make recommendations for priority actions that can expand and accelerate the MDG and WSSD water and poverty agenda.

In conclusion of the event, the Conference Chair, Professor Dr. Jan Pronk, presented to the final plenary a Chair's Summary which was submitted to CSD 12th Session Chair, Minister for the Environment, Mr. Børge Brende, Norway.

The present Report has two parts. Part I contains the Chair's Summary. Part II contains the recommendations reported from the multi-stakeholder dialogues, from the conference plenary and breakout sessions, underpinning the Chair's Summary. Together, these recommendations as edited by The International Water Academy constitute the "Water for the Poorest" program of priority actions for key stakeholders to follow up on.

The International Water Academy hereby wishes to express its gratitude to all conference participants who very actively brought forward their knowledge, experiences, views and recommendations, - as well as thanks to the key institutions that supported the Conference.

The International Water Academy is, however, fully responsible for the content of this Report.

Finally, The International Water Academy would like to thank the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for providing financial support for the Conference.

Oslo, February 10, 2004

Tor Wennesland

Secretary General

The International Water Academy

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Ulf Arne Gürgens

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PART I

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

In the Chair's Summary, Professor Dr. Jan Pronk concluded the conference proceedings with the key messages and the main recommendations for addressing access to water resources and water and sanitation.

WATER, - AND THE CALL TO ERADICATE POVERTY

At the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), world leaders acknowledged that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. Effective development and management of water resources and efficient and equitable provision of water supply and sanitation services are essential for poverty reduction, ecosystem protection and sustainable growth. Sound water resources management has become more urgent as water becomes scarcer, its quality declines, environmental and social concerns mount, and the threats posed by floods and droughts are made worse by climate change. It is the poorest that suffer most from inadequate water and sanitation services.

Clean water is essential for human health and survival. Safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and hygienic practices like hand washing are a precondition for human health and for overall reductions in malnutrition, morbidity and mortality, especially among children. Access to clean water and sanitation services is critical to sustainable development, including environmental protection and food security.

THE CONFERENCE

On 4 – 5 November 2003, stakeholders from Governments in the South, from donor countries and the international donor community, from civil society in the South, the international business community and wate professionals were convened by the International Water Academy (TIWA) in Stavanger, Norway, to discuss "Water for the Poorest". The conference concentrated on how to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for water and the Johannesburg WSSD targets on sanitation and Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), and the outcome of the Conference will be reported to CSD 13.

"WATER FOR THE POOREST" KEY MESSAGES

1. The Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation are achievable.

We are currently not on track and we have an imperative to act upon the promises made by our political leaders. Well-intended but misguided policies can distort the situation even further. Actors at all levels should prioritize services to the poorest and take steps to mobilize domestic and external financial resources. Governance should be improved to ensure that the voice of the poor is heard at all levels, from the local up to the international level. National and international priorities should be based on social justice. Much of what is needed to satisfy basic human needs for water and sanitation is not expensive to supply - by means of reallocation and redistribution of already available resources, much can be accomplished. If priority is not given to the poorest, their situation will worsen. Giving priority to the poor implies less to the not so poor.

2. National governments have the main responsibility, but not the sole responsibility.

Not all responsibilities can be shifted to national governments. The international community has a responsibility for providing basic support to countries where the national capacity to carry out pro-poor policies are weak. This includes both countries in conflicts and countries in extreme poverty.

3. People have a right to safe water supplies that satisfy their basic needs at a price they can afford.

Water resources are a common good to be controlled by governments on behalf of their citizens. National governments should be accountable for providing access to water and sanitation to all of their citizens.

4. Halving the proportion of poor by 2015 is an internationally agreed priority, but the other half of the poor is equally important.

Even having achieved the MDGs, it is imperative to redress poverty further. Actions to that end have to start now.

ADDRESSING ACCESS TO WATER RESOURCES AND WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES FOR THE POOREST

The key to better water management and improved service delivery is three-fold: improved water governance ensuring the effective use of existing resources and the active participation of all stakeholders; a substantial increase in the financing of water infrastructure and targeted financing schemes for the poorest; and empowerment and capacity building to that end.

Governance

National and local governments should decide how to organize their water and sanitation services. Governments should make their own decisions on service provision options and how to address the needs of the poor. Donors and lending agencies should not make private sector involvement a pre-condition for water sector support. The issue is not public or private but sustainable access and efficient delivery of services at low cost. Planning and service provision should be carried out at the lowest level of decision making with the effective participation of the poorest.

Reforms and investments should go hand in hand. Actions to enhance institutional capacity, policy reforms and funding of infrastructure should come as a package rather than funding being made conditional on the completion of reforms. Official development assistance must adopt a "learning-by-doing" approach rather than insisting upon a sequential, conditional approach. Indeed, reforms are needed such as the development of clear and stable legal and regulatory frameworks and anti-corruption measures. However, reforms cannot be a substitute for investments.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) must be *for* the people, *of* the people and *by* the people. IWRM plans and PRSPs should be part of the national processes of planning and budgeting. The entry point of IWRM should be poverty eradication. All countries should have IWRM processes completed or well under way by 2005. Support should be given to developing countries that will not reach the target.

Financing Water for the Poorest

Attract more funds to sub-sovereign and local levels. More finance should be raised locally, through progressive tariffication, taxation and local capital markets. Where the poorest cannot afford to pay the full cost of water and sanitation, tariff systems should facilitate social targeting. National and international capital should fund micro-financing schemes for water and sanitation, allowing poor people to finance small-scale water infrastructure and service provision.

In the allocation of domestic resources, priority should be given to the poorest. Increased coverage of water and sanitation to the poorest would lead to improved social welfare and environmental and economic benefits. Priority should be given to scaling up services to those who lack access to safe water and sanitation, rather than improving services to populations that already have access.

Increase funding levels and disbursements targeting the poorest. Financial contributions need to be increased from all the main sources of finance: national governments, donors, multilateral financing institutions, commercial lenders, private investors, voluntary donations, solidarity schemes, etc. Improved efficiency of resource utilization should be given priority next to the development of new funding mechanisms

designed to reach the poorest. Where effective demand seems to be lacking, creative efforts have to be made to translate apparent needs into schemes ready for financing and implementation.

Redirect international support to the poorest and to the countries in most need. Financial support for water supply and sanitation by donors and international financial institutions should be channelled to the countries in most need. Redirecting will require poverty mapping and impact analysis.

Empowerment

A demand-responsive and people-centred approach is required. The MDGs are global in character but they must be implemented locally, at city-, village- and community levels, where people live and shelter and services are required. Successful water supply and sanitation projects must be demand-responsive and people-centred which implies that the community initiates, and helps plan, implements, maintains and then owns the systems. Communities are best placed to judge what is needed and how service provision can be made sustainable.

Grant property rights and tenure to the poorest – no ownership, no sustainability. Better governance should secure the rights and entitlements of the poor through legal reforms, enforcing mechanisms and institutions. Granting property rights and tenure security to low- income households will stimulate the effective demand for water and sanitation, both in informal settlements in peri-urban areas as well as in rural areas.

Empower the poorest. Equitable participation in decision-making over services and management of water resources demands empowerment of the poorest. Empowering the poorest will mean liberation of women from

the daily drudgery, lost time and opportunities. This will enable school attendance. Sanitation and education for girls are closely linked, as their school attendance requires separate sanitation facilities.

Capacity is scarce at all levels. All actors should help strengthen the capacity of households, local communities and local authorities to undertake a fair and sustainable water management and planning as well as the operation of water and sanitation services. Water supply and sanitation to the poorest is in the end a local issue.

PART II

ELABORATION OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

This part contains the recommendations reported from the multi-stakeholder dialogues, from the conference plenary and breakout sessions, underpinning the Chair's Summary. Together, these recommendations as edited by The International Water Academy constitute the "Water for the Poorest" program of priority actions for key stakeholders to follow up on. *Sections in italics contain the proposals in the Chairs' Summary.*

GOVERNANCE: PRIORITY ACTIONS

- ***National and local governments should decide how to organize their water and sanitation services.***

Governments should make their own decisions on service provision options and how to address the needs of the poor. Donors and lending agencies should not make private sector involvement a pre-condition for water sector support. The issue is not public or private but sustainable access and efficient delivery of services at low cost. Planning and service provision should be carried out at the lowest level of decision making with the effective participation of the poorest.

Ensure access to basic services for all: Adopt the Human Right to Water. Every country should acknowledge the basic human Right to Water that the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ECOSOC) affirmed in November 2002. Recognition of this right in national policy-making and legislation is critical to bring about the fundamental approach to poverty eradication. Practical policies and strategies are needed to address the real problems of the poor.

National governments must co-operate more extensively with local governments. Local governments are at the forefront of water and sanitation services. In order to ensure that local action can proceed according to national programs, central governments should use input from local governments when determining spending priorities, design institutional frameworks and redistribute resources.

Central governments should design comprehensive fiscal policies that take the variety of local situations into account and provide adequate incentives. In order to be motivated to pay their dues on schedule,

individuals must clearly see the positive results of water taxes. Particular care must be taken to ensure that all individuals can afford a minimum amount of water. Incentives to consume more (i.e. savings of scale) should be removed. Focus must be on service delivery.

- ***Reforms and investments should go hand in hand:***

Actions to enhance institutional capacity, policy reforms and funding of infrastructure should come as a package rather than funding being made conditional on the completion of reforms. Official development assistance must adopt a "learning-by-doing" approach rather than insisting upon a sequential, conditional approach. Indeed, reforms are needed such as the development of clear and stable legal and regulatory frameworks and anti-corruption measures. However, reforms cannot be a substitute for investments. All actors can act on acceptable high–return projects that benefit the poor while reform and planning continues.

Aid criteria must be simple and flexible so as not to block projects needlessly. Results are urgently needed in the field. An inherent part of risk should be accepted in ODA-funded programs. This is necessary for the acceleration of project implementation.

Clear and measurable targets as well as monitoring of progress should support the drive for action and focus should be on service delivery. Monitoring and evaluation need to be dramatically improved and accelerated at all levels. Stakeholders jointly need to be clear on what they want to achieve, by defining goals, target groups, and what dimensions of poverty to address (livelihoods, health, hazards). Simple and comparable indicators must be presented and transparent benchmarking promoted. The adoption and follow-up of pro-poor policies focusing on access to sustained, reliable services rather than only on construction of infrastructure is critical.

There is a need for an independent authoritative group that assesses progress in the attainment of the water and Sanitation MDGs, both in terms of outputs and inputs, with ability to 'name and shame' those who are not delivering – and give credit to those who are.

- ***Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) must be for the people, of the people and by the people.***

IWRM plans and PRSPs should be part of the national processes of planning and budgeting. The entry point of IWRM should be poverty eradication. All countries should have IWRM processes completed or well under way by 2005. Support should be given to developing countries that will not reach the target.

Integrated Water Resources Management must underlie all projects: When elaborating strategies, programs and projects, whether it be at the national or local level, the impact of the new initiatives on the wider environment (downstream-upstream, wetlands and thus flood control, fisheries...) and on surrounding populations who depend on that environment, must be considered. Water must be a matter for all sectors and ministries, strongly involving public finance. In particular, these plans must look at how IWRM can serve the poorest of the poor. The entry point of IWRM should be poverty eradication.

Water and sanitation must be better reflected in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPS) PRSPs need to reflect the MDGs and prioritize water and sanitation, as a first step.

Government and operators within the Water and Sanitation sector should engage in the PRSP process and ensure it receives adequate attention in PRSP documentation through:

1) Adequate diagnostics and implementation through improvements in water and sanitation sector information and evaluation systems;
2) Development of medium-term programs and supporting financing mechanisms; and
3) Advocacy strategies enabling different stakeholders to understand and continue to believe in the importance of water and sanitation in poverty reduction.

PRSPs can be a vehicle for implementing sector reforms and for gaining access to development funds both through national budgets and from external sources such as donor funds. Making the business case for water is crucial. This should be done by articulating clearly and persuasively the development rationale for investments in water and sanitation.

FINANCE: PRIORITY ACTIONS

The Johannesburg vision has not yet been translated into action.

In recent years, no major advances towards the Millennium Development Goals have been noticed in the field. The overall situation is not satisfactory:

New projects are necessary to accelerate access to water and sanitation services. Local governments are not yet fully on board, and overall, financing of the water sector has not yet increased. Some donors declare being unable to spend all their money because of a shortage of acceptable projects.

- ***Attract more funds to sub-sovereign and local levels***

More finance should be raised locally, through progressive tariffication, taxation and local capital markets. Where the poorest cannot afford to pay the full cost of water and sanitation, tariff systems should facilitate

social targeting. National and international capital should fund micro-financing schemes for water and sanitation, allowing poor people to finance small-scale water infrastructure and service provision.

Sub-national entities (local governments, communities, NGOs) must have better access to donor funds. Donors should better take into consideration the specificity of the water sector where most actors are local, and should therefore design their programs in such ways that they can be used efficiently by local, responsible authorities. Tighter cooperation between donors and local entities may proceed through existing associations of local actors such as Cities' partnerships or NGO networks, and may focus on the establishment of regional funds, conditions of sustainability and a reference framework to support decentralisation.

Overseas Development Aid (grants, credit enhancement, guarantees) and government subsidies should be used to mobilize local liquidities. Several tools exist for this, such as micro-credit programs and revolving funds. ODA and subsidies also serve to give confidence to small-scale investors (local banks, funds, individuals). In order to allow donors to find suitable outlets for their money faster, project preparation facilities should either be created, or expanded from the existing ones. Such facilities should focus on formulating the demands existing at the local level.

- ***In the allocation of domestic resource, priority should be given to the poorest.***

Increased coverage of water and sanitation to the poorest would lead to improved social welfare and environmental and economic benefits. Priority should be given to scaling up services for those who lack access to safe water and sanitation, rather than improving services to populations that already have access.

Central governments should demonstrate political priorities by increasing budget contribution to local water and sanitation projects and for targeting the poorest. Water is still not high enough on most nations' agenda. In order to create broader developmental impact, Central governments should give water higher priority by increasing the budget allotted to water and sanitation, particularly to local NGO, CBO and government project. This will create windfall effects in other sectors (education, health, environmental and economic benefits). Setting aside a percentage of the government's total annual budget to finance water and sanitation projects is suggested. This could make funding available for infrastructure to the unserved, including subsidies targeting basic supply for the poorest.

Governments should promote the formulation of needs and demands at the household and community levels. Sustainable projects should take root in clearly defined and expressed demands, not least because such demands are often a prerequisite for funding. NGOs can also have a role to play in defining and formulating effective demand.

Solutions and their financing must be adapted to the different types of human settlements (urban suburbs, small cities and villages), while taking local cultures into account. Urban suburbs share constraints (same raw water) with the main city but may also benefit from nearby existing facilities and the formalization of the water vendor system. Villages must often start with low-cost appropriate technologies. Small cities require extensive infrastructures. Cultural differences must also be accepted: solutions and methods appropriate for a certain region may not function in another.

Informal private service providers must be integrated into the total system of service providers. These actors service segments of the population that are not reached by the main water company of the area. By acknowledging their role, reaching rate agreements with the main company and regulating them properly, the

end users can be assured of better service and water quality. This formalization process must, however, protect the poor from price increases.

- ***Increase funding levels and disbursements targeting the poorest***

Financial contributions need to be increased from all the main sources of finance: national governments, donors, multilateral financing institutions, commercial lenders, private investors, voluntary donations, solidarity schemes, etc. Improved efficiency of resource utilization should be given priority next to the development of new funding mechanisms designed to reach the poorest. Where effective demand seems to be lacking, creative efforts have to be made to translate apparent needs into schemes ready for financing and implementation.

Governments must mobilize private internal money. In many countries, liquidities are available, both from private institutions and individuals. Innovative ways of encouraging investment from these parties must be developed. In order to increase efficiency, investment should be as direct as possible, with few if any intermediaries.

Donors must better coordinate and harmonize their actions, particularly regarding their administrative requirements. Too much energy, time and money is lost on multiple reports when a standardized format could enable recipients to complete a single report that would satisfy several authorities. Furthermore, better communication between donors could allow combinations in project funding that would result in stronger financial architecture. We need to move away from single projects to support for programs and budget support.

- ***Redirect international support to the poorest and to the countries in most need.***

Financial support for water supply and sanitation by donors and international financial institutions should be channelled to the countries in most need. Redirecting will require poverty mapping and impact analysis.

EMPOWERMENT: PRIORITY ACTIONS

- ***A demand-responsive and people-centred approach is required***

The MDGs are global in character but they must be implemented locally, at city- , village- and community levels, where people live and shelter and services are required. Successful water supply and sanitation projects must be demand-responsive and people-centred which implies that the community initiates, and helps plan, implements, maintains and then owns the systems. Communities are best placed to judge what is needed and how service provision can be made sustainable.

- ***Grant property rights and tenure to the poorest no ownership, no sustainability***

Better governance should secure the rights and entitlements of the poor through legal reforms, enforcing mechanisms and institutions. Granting property rights and tenure security to low income households will stimulate effective demand for water and sanitation, both in informal settlements in peri-urban areas as well as in rural areas.

- ***Empower the poorest***

Equitable participation in decision-making over services and management of water resources demands empowerment of the poorest. Empowering the poorest will mean the liberation of women from the daily drudgery, lost time and opportunities. This will enable school attendance. Sanitation and education for girls are closely linked, as their school attendance requires separate sanitation facilities.

Bring the poor in rural and urban areas to the heart of the decision making process. Empowerment of th poorest requires meaningful participation through listening to this especially vulnerable group and respecting their existing knowledge, social structures, institutions and leadership. Special attention must be paid to the needs of women and of marginalized, indigenous and the very poorest people. General concepts of empowerment and ownership should translate into specific laws and regulations.

Ensure that governments and support agencies participate in the people's agendas and are accountable to the people, not vice-versa. Continuous support must be provided not only to the communities in their managerial work, but also to the intermediary organizations (e.g. local government) that help the communities

Locally directed projects should be given first priority.

These projects often incur lower costs than externally managed ones, as the population has the best knowledg about local resources, can contribute labor and select a system within its means. Locally directed projects als have better chances of being economically sustainable. Multi-partite contracts (state, local authority stakeholders, NGOs, donors), cities' contracts and other similar aids to concerted management should be favored.

- ***Capacity is scarce at all levels***

All actors should help strengthen the capacity of households, local communities and local authorities to undertake a fair and sustainable water management and planning as well as the operation of water and sanitation services. Water supply and sanitation to the poorest is in the end a local issue.

Community empowerment and capacity building. It is necessary to overcome the barriers to community participation, management and empowerment in order to achieve sustainable water and sanitation services for the poor. Participation and empowerment ensure that poor communities genuinely benefit from these services and help increase the impact and effectiveness of development investments. This will require that resources be spent on building social infrastructure: - on developing mechanisms for community participation, on building genuine community management and skills, and on activities that support the empowerment of individuals, communities and their advocates. Priority should be given to: 1) promoting community participation, management and empowerment; 2) building advocacy capacity to engage in genuine bottom-up participatory planning and 3) to scale up community management approaches.

1. The capacity of communities and local governments to take up their role in delivering water and sanitation services must be reinforced. All actors should help strengthen the capacity of households, local communities and local authorities to undertake a fair and sustainable water management and planning and operation of water and sanitation services. This includes the capacity to administer and manage the finances of water and sanitation projects and systems. Water supply and sanitation to the poorest is in the end a local issue, the struggle to achieve the MDGs for water will have to be waged in human settlements, - cities, towns and villages, where water is consumed and waste generated. Capacity building efforts should be tightly linked to follow-up investments at national and local levels, targeted at the poorest.

2. Advocacy at all levels is a precondition for raising the profile of water: Advocacy requires capacity building, tools and funds and is required both in the South and North, including donor agencies. Communication campaigns targeting the poorest are frequently needed to make water supply and sanitation successful.

3. Scale up community management. Replicate each community's successes in other communities. In order to spread an understanding of empowerment and community management community exchange visits, mass media coverage and publications should be organized. Financial resources should be made available at the local level for community empowerment as well as for the physical aspects of water and sanitation services and for assisting local government staff and organizations to adopt the concept of community management. In addition, efforts should be undertaken to involve stakeholders (e.g. consumer groups, NGOs, private sector, national government, external support agencies) in water management through partnerships.